

Book 2

These poems fill an intermediate period, although they have been written at various times.

Although the Vietnam war and its ensuing developments like the Students for a Democratic Society and the Black Panthers, was a major influence on my generation, the talent for people to vehemently divide and disagree with each other, causing all sorts of mayhem in the process, has not disappeared today. In fact it would seem that in some ways we are a more contentious people today. The internet, for one, has allowed our propensity to distinguish ourselves from “others” to run rampant. When all the news is “fake” how do we know whom to trust ? The bunker mentality of us against them in some ways inspired this next poem, really more of a prose poem, or just prose. . .

In any case, I hope it will remind everyone that, as Maya Angelou says in her poem “The Human Family”, “...we are more alike my friends than we are unlike”.

saga of names
changed to confuse the innocent
where they were
also a well-kept secret
even secrets were hard to keep
probably the climate
the hammers were all rusted
summer passed too fast to remember
energy losing glamor and cigarettes gone
this tune has ragged edges
a rock and roll reject
1971 never looked better
beds were getting bigger then
names were really important

where did this begin
just the lights changing
maybe your imagination
there was a disturbance
at a glance
difficult to detect
right above my thumb
all the pictures blurred inexplicably
yesterday
i mean tomorrow
we'll go out and have a look
you stay here
watch
home was never like this

Sometimes you just want to enjoy the images that words can paint, without doing too much analysis. I struggled with concrete poetry for awhile. The idea of translating visible structures into structured words seemed like it might provide some discipline to my generally undisciplined approach. So much for that idea. Here are a couple of representative poems, one from New Jersey and one from California. NB – difficulty level increases as you progress.

v
v v v
v v v
e v v v e
v v v
v v v

i
b i i r i i d
r i i i i
i i r i i
i i i i i

s s s s s
s s s s s
s s s s s
s

c o l d
m o o n

o v e r
d a r k

b l u e
s o v e

r p a l
e s s a

l m o n
s o f t
o v e r
g r a y g a t h e r i n g

The next poem was written in my early college days. An attempt to explain the jumble of different people a person from a small town encounters in the great world. The poem is cast as a column of flame which distorts the words as the eye follows along. Told you it would take some work. You may enjoy the new sounds of the distorted words and the challenge of decoding the original words. If so, you should stop reading and skip to the poem now.

But if you want to avoid the heavy labor, here are the words it is made of:

that which left by spoons distance - measuring to mount – an insane positioning- aimless alike – this naked hover – defenseless as a flame.

tha
twi
chleft
bys
po
onsdi
stance
me
as u
ring
tomo
untanin
sane
position
inga
im
less
alike
thisna
ked ho
verde
fens
elessa
saflame